
News Release

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SCAG OFFERS TO WORK WITH LAWA ON REGIONAL AIRPORT STRATEGY

Los Angeles – On the heels of the Los Angeles City Council approving the recent settlement agreement reached over the LAX Master Plan, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) presented a proposal today for how they can help Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) develop a comprehensive plan to implement a regional airport system. As part of the settlement agreement, the city agreed to work with SCAG, FAA, airport operators and neighboring counties to develop a plan that decentralizes future airport demand throughout Southern California's airports. In addition to LAX, LAWA is responsible for the operation of Ontario International Airport and Palmdale Regional Airport.

SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano spoke to the LAWA Board of Airport Commissioners and proposed ways that they can develop a new plan that will allow LAX and the Southern California regional airport system to accommodate future passenger and cargo demands.

"We welcome the opportunity to work with LAWA to develop a truly regional airport system that minimizes growing pressures on LAX and maximizes use of Southern California's airport assets," said SCAG Executive Director Mark Pisano. "It is our hope that SCAG can provide LAWA with the tools it needs to develop both short- and long-term solutions to Southern California's airport needs."

According to SCAG, approximately 86 million people currently utilize Southern California's airport system each year, with approximately 60.7 million using LAX. In terms of cargo demand, the regional system carried approximately 2.8 million tons of cargo in 2004, with LAX responsible for around 74 percent of that total cargo.

By the year 2030, demand on the regional airport system is expected to be as high as 170 million air passengers and 8.72 million tons of cargo, far beyond the capacity of LAX. As part of the recent settlement, LAWA and the city agreed to limit passenger growth at LAX to 78

(more)

million air passengers, meaning that Southern California's airports will need to accommodate the remaining demand.

Pisano commended LAWA and the city for reaching an agreement with airport-area communities to develop a new master plan. The settlement calls for a working group to discuss ways to disperse air traffic among the region's airports. As the lead planning agency for the six-county Southern California region, SCAG has long advocated for developing a decentralized regional airport system to handle future passenger and cargo demands.

To foster a regional system, SCAG recommends LAWA consider its four public use airports (LAX, Ontario, Palmdale, Van Nuys) as one regional airport. In the short-term, SCAG proposes that LAWA develop additional "flyaway" facilities that will alleviate road congestion and draw demand away from LAX to other regional airports, particularly Ontario. In the long-term, SCAG suggests developing high-speed ground access to make the region's other airports more accessible and convenient for flyers.

"A system of flyaways and HOV lane improvements will help us meet some of the short-term airport access challenges while the long-term approach is developed," stated Pisano. "Ultimately, connecting our airports with a high-speed transportation system will provide passengers with viable alternatives to LAX and help disperse projected airport demand throughout the region."

While LAX will continue to be the region's primary airport, SCAG strongly believes that Ontario, Palmdale, John Wayne, Bob Hope, Palm Springs, San Bernardino Logistics, San Bernardino International, March Air Field and other regional airports must be able to accommodate their portion of projected aviation demand. SCAG has called for a more decentralized system, with LAX having approximately 46 percent of total regional air passengers and 27 percent of total regional air cargo in 2030.

For more information about SCAG's regional airport planning efforts, please call Jeff Lustgarten or Dan Witzling of Cerrell Associates at 323/466-3445 or visit the SCAG web site at www.scag.ca.gov.